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CHINA: Liberal Politicians Expelled From Hong Kong

China's National People's Congress announced the expulsion of two Hong Kong activists from the Basic Law Drafting Committee responsible for drawing up the miniconstitution that will govern the colony after it reverts to Chinese control in 1997. Both have attacked Beijing's use of force to quell prodemocracy demonstrations in June and demanded China offer concrete guarantees in the Basic Law, to be promulgated in March, that it will maintain Hong Kong's capitalist system. A third Hong Kong delegate resigned to protest the Tiananmen massacre.

The decision to expel two of 59 Hong Kong delegates is part of a campaign to show Hong Kong residents as well as the UK that China will not tolerate what it views as meddling in its internal affairs. But the expulsion will hurt British efforts to rebuild local confidence by pressing ahead with democratization of the colony's political system despite Chinese protests.